"THE ETERNAL WANDERER."

A DRAMA IN PROLOGUE AND THREE ACTS

BY

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"THE ETERNAL WANDERER."

THE CHARACTERS.

THE ETERNAL WANDERER
AARON BERMAN

THE GIRL
ANNA BERMAN

BOGATKA - A Russian Peasant.

MRS. BERMAN

DOCTOR WIENER

JACOB FELD

SAUL BERMAN

DIMITRI CHERNOV - Chief of the Police of Kovno.

IVAN DYBA - His Secretary.

ISAAC COHEN

MRS. COHEN

MOSES GOLDBERG

MRS. GOLDBERG

RUSSIAN SOLDIERS

JEWS - MEN - WOMEN and CHILDREN.

TIME: September, 1915.

PLACE: Kovno, Russia.

"THE ETERNAL WANDERER."

PROLOGUE.

SCENE: A rugged path leading from upstage R in a winding, tortuous way to front L. In the distance is a sterile plain, on which can be seen the ruins of a city.

TIME: The Eternal Present.

DISCOVERED: As the curtain goes up the stage is dark. The lights go up slowly, and little by little the desolate scene appears. The lights never go up full, just enough to give a hazy effect of distance, and to show the characters against the background. The wind is blowing strongly, dark clouds sweep across the sky. Two crows fly across the stage, linger a moment and fly off again.

Incidental music, wild, wierd, minor, swells with the blowing of the wind, and as the Characters appear, it drops to diminuendo, and keeps up to the end of the Prologue.

The Eternal Wanderer (in the play Aaron Berman) an old patriarch, dressed in flowing white robes, enters. He is blind, and is led by a girl (in the play Anna Berman) Her hair is loose, blowing in the wind, her dress shabby, her feet bare.

They come slowly forward along the rugged path.

Wanderer

Where are we?

Girl

On an endless road.

Wanderer

(Sadly)
Yes. Yes.

Girl

It's cold and dark, and we're all alone. I'm tired.

Wanderer

Be patient.

Girl

You always tell me "Be patient," but we are wandering without end. I'm tired. Where is the end?

Wanderer

Soon. Soon.

Girl

When will we rest? I'm tired.

Wanderer

Soon, soon.

Girl

Why did we come to this desolate place? A land of eternal night, without a single ray of sunshine to warm and cheer us?

Wanderer

It is not for us to ask why? Have patience, the sun will rise soon. It must. I can see it.

Girl

How can you see when you are blind?

Wanderer

I see, but not with my eyes.

Girl

What you see is so far away we may never reach it. What is near you cannot see. Yesterday you stumbled in the rocky path, and your blood trickled over the stones.

Wanderer

Yes, yes! Tell me, on our left, is there a river?

Girl

Yes.

Wanderer

And beyond it a hill?

Girl

No.

Wanderer

No? Then it has been levelled.

Girl

You know this place?

Wanderer

Yes, I remember it.

Girl

It's strange. You've been everywhere. Everywhere we go, you've been there. I believe you've been all over the world.

Wanderer

Yes, I am the Eternal Wanderer. Look, to the right there must be a cemetery.

Girl

No, I see nothing but scattered stones.

Wanderer

So.

Girl

Was this place populated? Were there people here?

Wanderer

Yes.

Girl

Did you know these people.

Wanderer

Yes.

Girl

Were they happy.

Wanderer

They are no more. Nobody remembers them, only I.

Girl

As long as we've wandered about, we've seen nothing but misery, no happiness, no love, only strife and misery. You are old, some day you will leave me, and I'll be left alone. All alone! Where are you taking me? Is there a land where we can rest, where we can find a little love, a little human sympathy - a little happiness? You have been everywhere you have seen everything? Is there such a land? Did you ever see this land? Or are you fooling me?

Wanderer

Be patient. Stones. Only stones.

Girl

What is the matter? The tears are pouring from your blind eyes. You are crying - you, who know everything.

Wanderer

Here were human beings - a large city. Each stone is a frozen tear. Do you see what I see? Look! Look! Like shadows I see their souls! Look! Look!

(She cowers at his feet.)

CURTAIN.

"THE ETERNAL WANDERER."

ACT I.

SCENE: Dining room of Aaron Berman's house in Kovno, Russia. Furnishings and appointments indicate the home of a well-to-do man. There is a door up stage leading to street, another door R., and another L. leading into interior of house. There is also a window up stage leading out on the street. On the R. side, built into the wall, is a typical Russian oven, used for heating purposes. There is a table L of C, and other furniture needed to furnish a dining room.

TIME: September - the tail-end of summer - after dinner. There is still sufficient daylight left so that artificial light is not needed for the course of this act.

DISCOVERED: As the curtain goes up the stage is empty. A violin is heard playing off stage R. It is Anna playing her violin in her room. The tune is lively, but minor in strain, something from Tchaikowsky.

BOGATKA enters from street. He is a typical Russian peasant, simple, not over bright, but kindly and good natured. He is dressed in a rough blouse, and the ends of his trousers are tucked in a pair of rough boots. He takes off his hat as he enters, and listens to the music delightedly. He is very fond of music, and particularly the violin, which he plays himself.

MRS. BERMAN enters door R. She is a kindly woman in her fifties, simply and old fashionedly dressed, but European - not Yiddish.

Bogatka

Good evening, Mrs. Berman.

Mrs. Berman

You here again, Bogatka?

Bogatka
Yes, ma'am, because you see, they're talking in the city - about - you know - and I want to see your husband - Mr. Berman about my timbre.

Mrs. Berman
But why do you come to the house. Why don't you see him at the factory, if you want to talk business with him?

Bogatka
Because - you see - I don't know. If the Jews move - I want to know what about my timbre?

Mrs. Berman
(Thoughtfully - disturbed)
The Jews move? Where do we move?

Bogatka
I don't know. They're talking in the market that the Government is going to make all the Jews move from Kovno.

Mrs. Berman
(Worried)
Why?

Bogatka
I don't know. Maybe it's because the city's too small for the population.

Mrs. Berman
What nonsense, Bogatka. We're not going to move.

Bogtka
Is that so? I'm glad. Because, you see, I've been selling my timbre to Mr. Berman for nearly two dozen years - What am I talking about! More than that! At least twenty! And my father always said to me "You blockhead - you deal with Mr. Berman. He's an honest man." And he was right.

Mrs. Berman
That's alright, Bogatka. See Mr. Berman tomorrow.
(She starts for door L. Bogatka starts as if to go, but turns back again.)

Bogatka
The trouble is this, Mrs. Berman. Because, you see, if you move, who'll I sell my timbre to?

Mrs. Berman
But I'm telling you we're not going to move.

Bogatka
Is that so? I'm glad. But I'm only a poor peasant, and I have five children and a wife - but I'm glad. I'll see him at his office.

(Bogatka starts out. Mrs. Berman shows relief and starts to go again. Bogatka comes back again.)

Bogatka

Madam?

Mrs. Berman

(Turns annoyed)
What is it, now?

Bogatka

(Listens eagerly to the violin.)
Excuse me, but that's fine music. Who's playing the fiddle?

Mrs. Berman

My daughter Anna.

Bogatka

No!
(He laughs delightedly)
Your daughter! Ha, ha, ha! That's good! A woman playing the fiddle! That's good!

Mrs. Berman

(Smiling)
Who not?

Bogatka

Because, you see, a woman plays piano - alright! Or she sings - alright, but play a fiddle! Excuse me, that's good! Ha, ha! That's rich!
(Berman enters. He is a man nearly sixty, clean looking and prosperous. Gray hair, a well-trimmed beard, and European clothes.)

Berman

(Looks quickly from Mrs. Berman to Bogatka. He is displeased)
Bogatka! What are you doing here?

Bogatka

Because, you see, people in the market are talking about.....

Berman

(Breaking in anxiously)
Never mind about the people in the market. What do you want?

Bogatka

About my timbre.....

Berman

See me at my office tomorrow.

Bogatka

But you see, all my life I sold you my timbre, and if.....

Berman

(Sternly)
Tomorrow, I tell you.

Bogatka

(Persisting)
But.....

Berman

Go!

Botaka

Alright, excuse me.
(Exit, scratching his head dissatisfied.)

Mrs. Berman

Aaron, Bogatka was talking about that rumor that the Jews will be forced to leave Kovno.

Berman

(Irritated, trying to keep the truth from his wife.)
Oh, Bogatka! What does he know?

Mrs. Berman

But Aaron, it seems to be all about town, and when such a dull fellow as Bogatka hears it....

Berman

Nonsense, my dear. It's only a rumor. Didn't we hear the same rumor last year - and the year before - and ten years ago?

Mrs. Berman

(Worried)
Yes, but now-a-days so much of that sort of thing is really going on that I'm afraid.

Berman

Don't worry, dear. I'm rich and have influence. I have influential friends in Petrograd - there's really nothing for us to worry about.

Mrs. Berman

But here in Kovno the authority is with the Chief of Police Chernov.....

Berman

Chernov is not unfriendly to the Jews.....

Mrs. Berman

(Sarcastically)
Yes, very friendly - too friendly - particularly with Jewish girls

Berman

Chernov is easily reached. He likes Jewish money, too. For a thousand rubles our chief of Police will forget his official duties long enough for the government to change it's mind again. Wasn't it that way two years ago? Don't you remember?

Mrs. Berman

Yes, I remember.
(Anna stops playing.)

Berman

(Glad for an excuse to change the subject, claps his hands)
Brava! Brava! Anna plays beautifully, Rachel.

Mrs. Berman

Yes, she does, but no better than our Saul did before he went to the war.
(She is saddened.)

Berman

(Moodily)
Yes, yes. Saul's playing is over.

Mrs. Berman

(Simulating cheerfullness, for Berman's sake, changing the subject back to Anna again.)
Yes, and Anna is a good girl, but she's such a dreamer.

Berman

Dreamer? Oh, all girls are dreamers when their in love.

Mrs.Berman

No, Anna has always been that way. She's always been a strange child - her head's always in the clouds.

Berman

Oh, well, when she marries Jacob all that will be changed. He's such a practical fellow - lawyers must be. He's just the type of man for a girl like Anna.

Mrs. Berman

Yes, you're right.

Berman

Do you know, my dear, I've been thinking lately that I made a mistake in not going to America eight years ago, when my brother went.

Mrs. Berman

America? Aaron! Why should you think of that just now? I'm afraid, Aaron.....

Berman

No, no, my dear. I was only thinking that things will be very bad in Russia, after the war is over. Hard times will be sure to come, and it would have been better, while I still had health and strength, to have planted my seeds in America, for the children's sake.

Mrs. Berman

Are you sure that this rumor hasn't caused this regret?

Berman

No, no, my dear. I'm not worried about it, and you mustn't be.
(Anna enters. She has her violin with her.)
(To Anna)
That was beautiful, Anna. What was it?

Anna

Tchaikowsky. He's wonderful! I love him!

Mrs. Berman

I never heard you play so well, my dear.

Anna

(Puts the violin on the table.)
I always play well, mother, when i'm happy.

Berman

(Teasing her.)
And what makes you so happy at this particular moment, eh?
(Anna laughs happily)

Mrs. Berman

(To Berman)
It's because Jacob is coming, Aaron.

Berman

(Laughs and turns to Anna)
Is that it, my dear?

Anna

(Dreamily)
Yes, father. My prince is coming to me as fast as his gallant, swift steed can bring him.

Berman

A Russian express - 20 miles an hour.

(Laughs) Anna

Exactly - I sent him a message on my violin, as he speeds on his way.

Berman

There's no doubt he received it.

Anna

None whatever.

Berman

And have you received any wireless messages from him?

Anna

Yes, he was playing too - on the train.

Berman

Cards!

Anna

(With a mock shudder)
Ugh! How unromantic!
(Berman laughs.)

Mrs. Berman

Jacob doesn't play cards, I'm sure, Aaron. He's such a fine fellow.
(To Anna)
Does he dear?

Anna

Yes, he does. He's a regular fellow.

Berman

When does his train arrive?

Anna

At nine o'clock.

Berman

Lots of time.

Mrs. Berman

(Goes to Anna)
Don't forget to put on your pretty, blue dress, dear.

Anna

(Laughs)
I won't mother.
(Dr. Wiener enters. He is a man about Berman's age, but less robust, and showing his age more. His chief characteristic is a philosophical calm, that isn't shaken by anything surprising that may happen. He is very near-sighted, and wears thick spectacles, and he carries a thick cane, without which he cannot walk very well, although he is not lame or deformed. Simply weak. His dress is European, but rather slovenly. His hair is snow white, and tumbled, and his whiskers are a gray white, closely trimmed, but his mustaches are heavy and bristling. His eyebrows thick and shaggy. He hobbles in without paying any attention to the people present and goes right to the chess board on a small table in one corner. Anna notices him.)
Good afternoon, Dr. Wiener!

Wiener

(Pays no attention and does not answer her greeting. He takes up chess board, goes to the table and places it in position, then pouring the men out of the box carefully on the board, he takes a black man in one hand and a white man in the other, and goes to Berman, still without a word. He puts the hand holding the white man behind his back, and holds the other out to Berman.)
White or black?

Anna

(Laughingly goes behind Wiener and grasping the hidden hand)
I want the white!

Wiener

(To Anna)
Sh....Go way....go way!
(To Berman)
White or black?

Berman

(Puts his hand over the one Wiener holds out to him. Very seriously)
Give me the black.

Wiener

(Surprised, as he opens his hand.)
Well, you have it! Good!
(Starts for the table.)
I'm lucky again!
(Turns to Anna severely)
Your father is an honest man.
(Anna laughs. Wiener sits at the chess board and places the men. To Berman.)
Come.
(Berman comes to table and sits.)

Wiener

Well, do we have to move?

Berman

Sh....Wiener!

Mrs. Berman

Aaron! I thought you said it was only a rumor?

Berman

Of course. Don't worry.

Mrs. Berman

You're keeping the truth from me.

Berman

The truth - the truth! As a matter of fact - well - it is true, but I sent a petition to Petrograd - and - and - with my influence and connections I'm sure everything will be alright.

Anna

When do you expect the answer?

Berman

Tomorrow - today - any minute.

Anna

It would be terrible if the answer is not favorable. To tear up all the old associations, root and branch - and leave - Oh -

Berman

At worst only a few may have to move - the poorer element. We that have money and influence - we're alright.

Anna

That's terrible - we, who have money can move! Wherever we go we can take care of ourselves, but the poor - like the Goldbergs - and the Cohens - large families - and no resources except what they can pick up every day - living from hand to mouth - what will become of them?

Berman

It's sad, but really there's no use to worry - the answer to our petition is bound to be favorable. If it isn't we can begin to worry then.

Wiener

Well, move!

Berman

Yes, yes!
(They begin to play)
Wiener, what did you want to bring that up for?

Wiener

Eh? What's does it matter? Watch your queen.

Mrs. Berman

Thirty years of peace - it was too much - too good to last I am afraid.

Anna

Don't worry, mother. Father said there may be no danger.

Mrs. Berman

Can it be, Anna, in these modern times. In my day we expected these things, but now - the times are so different. You are of the new generation - tell me we've lived here thirty years side by side with the Gentile, like brothers - I can't understand it. Can it be true?

Anna

Don't worry, mother. We'll wait for the answer.
(Bell rings. They all start. The women turn helplessly toward (Berman. Berman listens, then slowly starts to get up.)

Wiener

But it's your move! Anna can answer!

Berman

No, I'll go myself.
(He goesout. The others keep their positions breathlessly, (without moving.)

Berman

(Off stage)
Jacob! Well, well, glad to see you.
(The others sigh with relief.)

Anna

Mother, it's Jacob!

Mrs. Berman

(Delighted)
Ah, yes.
(They start for the door. Berman enters with Jacob.)

Jacob

(To Mrs. Berman)
How do you do, Mrs. Berman.

Mrs. Berman

So early, Jacob? We didn't expect you till nine o'clock.

Jacob

(He starts for Anna, but stops.)
I took an earlier train.

Mrs. Berman

Oh, to surprise Anna, eh?

Jacob

Yes.

Mrs. Berman

((Goes to Anna and fingers her dress.)
It's too bad.

Anna

Mother.

Jacob

What's too bad?

Mrs. Berman

(Hastily)
Nothing, nothing. How's your mother, and your sister, and your brothers, and your Uncle Nathan?.....and your Aunt Sara and her husband and.....

Wiener

Give the boy a chance. Can't you see he's dying to get a word in with his sweetheart?

Jacob

(To Wiener.)
How are you Doctor?

Wiener

(Looking at the board.)
My position is veyy good.

Jacob

(Laughs and turns to Anna.)
Anna!

Anna

Jacob!
(They embrace.)
Did you come right through from Petrograd?

Jacob

Yes.

Anna

Didn't you stop off to see your folks?

Jacob

No.

Mrs. Berman

Jacob! You mean to say you haven't seen your mother?

Jacob

No.

Mrs. Berman

That's wrong. You're a bad - undutiful son. I'm surprised at you. Why didn't you stop off to see your mother?

Jacob

I wanted to see Anna first.

Mrs. Berman

(Looks at him beaming.)
Oh! I'll get you a little fish.

Jacob

Thanks! In all the six months I've been away I've been thinking of your fish.

Mrs. Berman

(Chidingly)
Oh, Jacob! I know you.
(Exit pleased.)

Berman

You don't mind, Jacob, if I continue playing with Doctor Wiener?

Jacob

(Looking at Anna)
Not a bit.

Wiener

He won't miss you. Watch your game.

Berman

It'll only take a few minutes to beat this fellow.

Wiener
What! You beat me? Like yesterday, eh?

Berman
Yesterday? Oh! Yesterday was Tuesday.

Wiener
Tuesday, eh? (Makes a move) Well, how do you like this for Wednesday, eh?
(He glares at Berman, gloating.)

Berman
(Looks at his position worried.)
Oh, bad!

Wiener
(Triumphantly)
Well move. Move.

Berman
(Lost in his game.)
Um!

Anna
(To Jacob - laughing.)
They'll fight till doomsday.

Jacob
(Laughs)
Well, are you glad to see me?

Anna
Of course! And you?

Jacob
The six months I've been away from you seemed like six years.

Anna
So you're a full-fledged lawyer, now?

Jacob
Yes, dear.

Anna
Congratulations!

Jacob
Thanks.

Anna
And you didn't find some other girl at the University you liked better than me?

Jacob
(Indignantly)
Anna!

Anna
Answer me like a man - not like a lawyer!

Jacob
(Holds up his hands solemnly)
The truth - the whole truth - and nothing but the truth. So help me

Anna
That's all right. Now, the real truth.
(Jacob laughs and kisses her.)

Wiener
(Looks up.)
What?
(He sees them in embrace, and looks away with a smile.)
Oh!

Jacob
(To Wiener.)
Nothing. That was the truth.

Wiener
(Interested in his game again.)
I'll tell you the truth, young man. I was the first to kiss Anna - but she was only two hours old!

Jacob
Anna, you never told me this.

Anna
Forgive me,
(Jacob laughs.)

Jacob
Now, listen, dear. I've laid out a plan for our future, and I'm sure you'll like it.

Anna
What is it?

Jacob
I'm going to practice right here in Kovno!

Anna
Really?

Jacob
Are you pleased?

Anna
(Joyfully)
Delighted!

Berman
I'm playing with Wiener, here, but my ear is on you two. I approve of your plan heartily, Jacob. We want to keep Anna with us as long

as we can. And you'll make your home right here, with us.

Anna

That's splendid! I had only one objection to marrying you, Jacob, that that was that I might have to leave this house. I love every stone of it. Every nook and corner is dear to me.

Jacob

Well, now that the last objection is removed, when will you marry me?

Anna

Oh, we have lots of time.

Jacob

No, there's only one reason for waiting, and that is to for me to start in business. This is a nice town, the people are lovely people, very friendly - oh - they'll give me lots of practice. Say in the Spring?

Anna

Well?

Jacob

In May?

Anna

The month of sunshine and flowers.

Jacob

Isn't that alluring?

Anna

Yes!

(Jacob takes her in his arms and kisses her.)

(Saul enters - he has only one arm.)

Saul

Break away!

(They break away and laugh.)

Jacob

Saul, my old friend.....

(Sees the missing arm.)

Where is your arm?

Saul

Arm? I parted company with it....

Jacob

Anna, you didn't write me about this? How did it happen, Saul?

Saul

Cut off - amputation.

Jacob

Oh!

Saul

Arm amputated by Surgeon 45th Regiment, Nicholaefsky Division. Wounded before Warsaw, bullet went through, shattering the bone. Honorably discharged - Unfit for further service. Excellency.
(Salutes.)

Jacob

Poor Saul!

Saul

(Sarcastically)
I'm a faithful soldier, defending my fatherland!

Jacob

When did you come home?

Saul

Three weeks ago. I have a medal, too. (Looks through his pockets) Where is it? Oh, here it is. You see, I have this in place of an arm.

Berman

Saul, please don't.

Saul

Oh, I'm not complaining. Two arms really are a luxury. I've learned to write with my left hand - pretty fair specimen, too.
(Puts his hand on Anna's fiddle box.)
I can't play the fiddle any more, but there are many people with two arms who play so that both of them ought to be amputated.

Berman

Sh....Mother is coming.
(Mrs. Berman enters with the fish.)

Mrs. Berman

(As she comes through the door.)
Now, Jacob, you shall have some of my sweet and sour fish....
(Sees Saul and stops.)
You know what happened to our Saul?
(She wants to cry, but attempts to be cheerful, for Saul's sake)

Jacob

Yes.

Mrs Berman

But it's really not so very bad. When you look at him from the left side, you can't even tell that the right arm is missing. Sit down, Jacob. (To Berman and Wiener.) Move over to the other end of the table with your chess, so Jacob can have room to eat his fish. Go on.

Berman

Alright, Rachel.

Wiener

Be careful, Berman, be careful.
(They move the board.)

Mrs. Berman

Now, if Saul had lost his leg, it would have been very bad. Without a leg, it is much worse than without an arm. So we must thank God it is only an arm. Sit down, Saul and have a little fish, too

Saul

Mother is right. If they had cut my leg off, how in the world could I travel when we Jews have to leave Kovno? I'd have to jump on one leg like a wounded sparrow.

Mrs. Berman

Don't talk foolishness, Saul, they're not driving us yet. The Gentiles have hearts. They know we've lived here thirty years, law abiding, peaceable, hurt no one - why should they drive us away?

Saul

(Bitterly)
Why? Doctor Wiener, you're a clever man, tell us why?

Wiener

Why.....
(He watches Berman's move.)
Um! That's bad.

Mrs. Berman

What does he know? He's only a philosopher.

Wiener

(Makes a move and betters his position.)
Ah, ah! That's better, eh?

Berman

(Bent on his game.)
Um!

Wiener

Since the beginning of Judaism - now 6000 years - we've been always going - always moving. Why are you so frightened now? Is it something new? We're used to it. We never stay to long in one place. We must move - we have to move - always onward - always forward. That is the Jew's experience. That is the way we've grown. And if we become complacent and forget to move, others come and remind us, sometimes gently - sometimes with a kick - and on we move!
(Looks at the board.)
Hey! What are you doing?

Herman

Taking your queen.

Wiener

Stop! Stop! There must be a mistake.

Berman
No, Wiener, you fell into my trap. Wednesday!

Wiener
(To Saul)
See what you've done with your foolish questions? Without my queen I'm as if without my right hand!

Saul
You have nothing on me, doctor.

Mrs. Berman
Sh....eh.....better have a little fish, Saul.
(To Wiener angrily)
Philosopher!

Saul
Thank you, mother.
(He sits down and eats. Mrs. Berman sits watching him, helping him, taking pleasure in his enjoyment of the fish. Wiener and Berman are engrossed in their game. Anna is sitting on the couch, lost in thought.)

Jacob
(Goes up to Anna and sits beside her.)
What are you thinking of, Anna?

Anna
I'm thinking of the plight of our people. How helpless we are - how we drift here and there at the mercy and caprice of the people among whom we live.

Jacob
What is there for us to do?

Anna
Do? That is our great trouble. What do we do? We weep - we cry out. We pray to God - and men, but do - nothing. Our very helplessness makes us despised. Oh, if we would only do something - now - now is the time - or never! If only another Maccabee would rise up among us to deliver us from this thralldom of inaction!

Jacob
Anna, you're dreaming again. Always a dreamer. What good does it do you - or our people?

Anna
No, it's not a dream. It means our very existence. Oh, if I could do something - if I could help - I'd give my life gladly - but what can I do? I'm only a weak, helpless woman.

Wiener
(He has been listening to Anna eagerly)
Eh, Berman, did you hear that? Our girl!
(To Jacob)
Look here, young man. If you don't take good care of her, you'll answer to me, do you hear?

(Jacob lifts Anna's hand to his lips.)
You're lucky I'm not forty years younger!

Mrs. Berman
My daughter married to a philosopher - never!

Jacob
A lawyer is bad enough! (To Saul) Saul, when I open my office, I want you to be my secretary.

Saul
I? What do I want with a job? I'm rich!

Jacob
Rich?

Saul
I get a pension from the government.

Jacob
Really? How much?

Saul
One ruble - twenty three kopeks a month - about 32 cents in American money, today.

Anna
(Gently)
Saul!

Saul
That's right. Twenty-three kopeks for my arm and for my medal - where is my medal? Oh, here it is. One ruble for the medal!
(Goes to Jacob - with feeling.)
Do you really want me? With only my left arm?

Jacob
Of course! In the practice of law we can get along without the right.

Saul
(Gives his hand to Jacob feelingly)
Thank you, Jacob.
(Jacob takes his hand heartily. Anna puts her head on Saul's shoulder tenderly. Mrs. Berman wipes away a tear. Bell rings. They all keep their positions, those sitting rise.

Berman
(Rises and controls himself.)
Check mate, Wiener!

Wiener
Yes, without the queen!
(Berman goes to door. He stands there a moment, listening.)

Chernov
(Off stage)
In there? Alright.

Berman

Chernov!
(Exit.)

Jacob

Who?

Anna

The Chief of Police.

Mrs. Berman

(Frightened.)
Chernov?
(Berman re-enters with Chernov and Dyba. Chernov is a big man, typical, fine looking Russian officer. He wears his official uniform. He's a man about forty, a little pompous. His hair is cut short pompadour, and he has a black mustache. In his speech he is short and crisp with men, but very gallant and polite with women. DYBA is a man about forty-five, pale, stoop shouldered, sinister. He is drressed in a uniform consisting of ordinary trousers and vest, but a coat of full dress cut, the material of dark blue cloth. The coat and the vest have brass, official buttons, with the Russian Eagle on them. Standing collar, and black necktie. On his left breast he has three medals.)

Chernov

Good afternoon.
(Sees Anna, and goes to her with interest.)
Good afternoon, Miss Berman.
(Holds his hand out to her.)

Anna

Good afternoon, Chief.

Chernov

(Holding on to her hand.)
I saw you three days ago, through my office window. You looked beautiful! You're even more beautiful now.

Anna

(Takes her hand away from him.)
Thank you.

Chernov

I don't know what it is, but there's something about the Jewish girls that.....(Looks at Anna admiringly).....um!
(Anna shrinks away from him slightly.)
It's a fine day, but it's cold.
(He looks around, sees Jacob and sizes him up.)

Anna

This is Mr. Feld.

Berman

Yes, he just came from Petrograd.

Chernov

Oh! Glad to meet you.

Jacob

Thank you.

Chernov
(Turns to Mrs. Berman.)
How do you do, Madam.

Mrs. Berman
Quite well, thank you. You haven't been to see us for some time.

Chernov
I've been very busy - very busy.

Mrs. Berman
Will you have a little fish?

Chernov
(Looks at the fish longingly)
No, thanks, i'm too busy.

Mrs. Berman
But real Jewish fish - sweet and sour! Just a little.

Chernov
well, I'll eat a little - only a little.
(He sits and begins to eat. Turns to Wiener.)
Oh, Doctor! What are you doing at the chess board all by yourself?

Wiener
I'm trying to figure out how I lost this game.

Berman
(To Chernov.)
I have some very good French wine.

Chernov
Eh? Well, fish like to swim.
(Berman goes to sideboard to get the wine. Dyba, who has been standing respectfully aside all this time, steps to Chernov and whispers in his ear.)

Chernov
(Stops eating and looks up.)
Eh?
(Dyba whispers again.)
Oh!
(Dyba steps back again. To Jacob.)
Pardon me, Mr. Feld. Did you have your passport vised at headquarters?

Jacob
No, I just arrived.
(He takes out his passport.)

Chernov
Only a formality, but it's the law. Give it to my secretary.
(Jacob hands the passport to Dyba.)

Jacob

(To Chernov.)
I want to go to Dwinsk tomorrow morning.

Chernov

Alright. You can have them tonight if you call at my office.
(To Dyba.)
Dyba, have the gentleman's passport ready for him tonight.

Dyba

Yes, sir.
(He looks over the passport, shakes it, but nothing falls out of it. To Jacob.)
Your religion?

Jacob

(Looks at him.)
Oh!
(He takes out a bill from his pocket, goes to Dyba and stands with his back to him, holding the bill out behind him. Dyba takes it.)

Dyba

(Looking at the passport)
Oh, I see it's here.
(Berman pours out the wine for Chernov.)

Chernov

(Tastes it.)
Very good. Very good. Get me a pen and ink, please.

Berman

(Bending over Chernov.)
To sign - the paper?

Mrs. Berman

Ink? Just a minute. Saul, where's the ink?
(Saul goes to get the ink.)

Berman

You have the answer to our petition?

Chernov

(With his mouth full of fish.)
Yum!

Mrs. Berman

(To Berman.)
Why do you disturb him? Why don't you wait till he's through eating? He's very hungry.
(Saul comes in with the ink. To Saul.)
Don't bother him with your ink. Let him eat.

Chernov

No, no, the ink. The ink.

Berman
He may eat - in peace - but, I ask only - what is the answer to our petition?

Chernov
I didn't issue the order. As far as I'm concerned you can live here a hundred years, but - you must leave the city.
(Silence. Berman bows his head. Anna steps to Jacob for (consolation. Jacob puts his arm around her waist. Wiener (looks up from the chess board. Dyba brings the paper to (Chernov, and steps back again respectfully.)

Wiener
Eh?

Saul
(Bitterly)
Forward march! Right, left, right, left.....

Anna
And the other people - must they leave, too?

Chernov
Yes, all the Jews.

Berman
So, so..

Chernov
(To Berman)
Sign this notice.

Berman
(Brokenly)
Where are my glasses?

Mrs. Berman
(Gets the glasses.)
Here they are, Aaron.

Chernov
(Pointing to place on paper.)
Sign here.
(Berman puts on his glasses. The others bend over him watching. (Berman with shaking hand signs the paper. He controls himself (and hands it to Chernov.)

Wiener
(Fingering the chess-men.)
So. So.
(He takes his cane and hobbles out without another word.)

Chernov
(Takes the paper from Berman.)
Good.
(Looks at the fish.)
Very good fish. Very good.

Mrs. Berman

(Trying to keep back her tears.)

You're welcome.

Chernov

(To Berman)

You'll have to settle your affairs - sell your property - You own this house?

Berman

Yes.

(Dyba looks around avariciously, with sparkling eyes.)

Chernov

A very nice house. I'd buy it myself, but I haven't the money.

Saul

(Bitterly)

To whom can we sell, if everybody goes?

Chernov

(To Saul shortly)

That's not my business.)

(To Berman)

You have enough time to dispose of everything.

(Mrs. Berman starts for door L.)

Anna

How much time have we?

Dyba

Twenty-four hours.

(They all look at each other blankly.)

(Mrs. Berman stops in the doorway.)

Chernov

But you can stay three days. This is a special favor for you....

(Mrs. Berman faints in the doorway. Berman, Jacob and Saul rush (to her to pick her up.)

Berman

(To Saul)

Water.

(Saul exits ahead of them. Jacob and Berman carry Mrs. Berman (out.)

Anna

(To Chernov dazed)

It's impossible - twenty four hours....

(She staggers, almost ready to faint. Dyba goes to help her, (catching her before she can fall. Chernov reaches her too, (they lead her to a chair.)

Oh, everything is swimming round.....

(Chernov takes her hand and fondles it.)

Chernov

Poor girl, you'll be alright.

(He motions to Dyba to go. Dyba exits. Anna sits in the chair (with her head thrown back - semi-conscious. Chernov strokes (her hair and face, showing a more than impersonal interest in (her. Anna comes to. She starts - brushes his hand aside - (gets up hastily, and starts for the door L.)

Chernov

Don't go, Anna.

(Anna stops hesitatingly. Saul enters.)

Saul

(As he crosses to table.)

Don't worry, Anna, mother is alright.

(He pours some wine into a glass and goes out with it.)

Chernov

I'm sorry - very sorry.

Anna

Oh, how can you be so cruel? Why don't you let us live here in peace?

Chernov

I am as helpless as you.

Anna

You're in authority here. I'm sure it's left to your descretion to inforce that order or not.

Chernov

No. The order comes direct from the department of the interior at Petrograd.

Anna

(Goes to him and lays her hand on his arm pleadingly.)

It's so inhuman. Give us a couple of months - one month in which to get ready. It isn't so much for us, we can take care of ourselves - but the poor people - the few belongings they have - is all they have in the world - give them time - give them a chance. Be generous - be kind.....

Chernov

(Lays his hand on hers a moment - Anna slowly withdraws it.)

If I could I'd help you gladly, but it's the law.

Anna

But there are so many laws governing the Jews. Most of them so inconsistent. Surely, if you want, you can find some lopphole to help us.

Chernov

Yes, there are about 5000 laws against the Jews. I'll tell you what Come to my office tonight at - eight o'clock. We'll look through

them together, and if I can find anything that will give us the opportunity to extend the time - legally, I'll do it, for you.

Anna

(Delighted)
Oh, I knew you had a kind heart. Thank you a thousand times.

Chernov

Then I'll look for you at eight.

Anna

Yes.
(They shake hands.)

Chernov

Better not tell anybody. There are spies everywhere, and if it should reach Petrograd that I'm favoring the Jews, it would be bad for me, and for the Jews too.

Anna

I understand.

Chernov

Good.
(Exit.) (Anna starts for the door to go to her mother. Jacob (Enters.)

Anna

Jacob, how is mother?

Jacob

She's coming.
(Mrs. Berman enters. Saul supports her.)

Anna

(Goes to her.)
Mother.....

Mrs. Berman

I'm alright, now.
(They lead her to a chair and she sits.)
Anna - Jacob - my children.....(To Jacob.) You wanted to be a lawyer in Kovno.....
(She cries.)

Anna

Don't worry mother. We'll always be together. Won't we Jacob?

Jacob

Yes, mother.

Saul

Of course we will.
(Berman enters with a glass of water.)

Berman

How do you feel now, Rachel?

(Mr. and Mrs. Goldberg and Mr. and Mrs. Cohen enter. They are very poor people and are very much excited.)

Cohen

God help us, Mr. Berman. What shall we do?

Goldberg

I must give up my stand in the market. We will starve.

Mrs Cohen

My child is sick. No, no, I won't go.

Cohen

Hush, Becky.

(To Berman helplessly)

We've always come to you for help, Mr. Berman. Help us! Help us!

Berman

I'm afraid I can do very little. I have to go too. But I'll see Chernov again tonight. One thing I can promise you. Wherever you go, you shall not want.

Goldbergs and Cohens

God bless you! God bless you!

(Exit.)

Mrs. Berman

(To Berman)

How can you go, Aaron? You are 62 years old - an old man. Your feet are not strong - your eyes are weak. How can you go?

Berman

Hush Rachel.

Mrs. Berman

The house must be sold. Everything must be sold. What will become of us?

(Embraces Saul.)

Saul!

Berman

We must trust in God!

Anna

Father, where will we go? Where?

Berman

When I was your age, I asked my father that same question, and he answered.....just as I am answering you.

C U R T A I N .

THE ETERNAL WANDERER.

ACT II.

"THE ETERNAL WANDERER."....ACT II.

SCENE: Private Office of Dimitre Chernov, Chief of Police of Kovno. There is a door L. leading to waiting room or outer offices. Another door R. Leading into Chernov's living rooms. Window C. Desk C. Chairs, bookcases, etc. In the corner L an ikon, or image of the Madonna, with a small red light burning over it. On the wall, over the desk, a portrait of of the Czar.

TIME: Same day, eight o'clock at night.

DISCOVERED: As the curtain goes up DYBA enters door L as if keeping some people out of door.

Dyba

You can't see the Chief, go on! Get out..
(He shuts the door, and goes to desk, takes pen from behind his ear and writes. Goldbergs and Cohens enter. They advance timidly, the men taking off their hats. Goldberg tries to attract Dyba's attention by coughing. Dyba pays no attention to them. Goldberg coughs again and advances nearer.)
(Turns to them scowling.)
What do you want?

Goldberg

Please, sir, may we see his Excellency the Chief of Police?

Dyba

(Angrily)
I told you a hundred times no.

Goldberg

(Surprised.)
Me? This is the first time I'm here.

Dyba

You or other Jews! What's the difference? You can't see him.
(He turns away again and writes.)

Goldberg

(Comes nearer to Dyba)
We are only poor Jews, but...if you please.....
(He holds out three rubles to him.)

Dyba

(Looks at him and the money a moment, then jumps up angrily)
What! You damn Jew! For three rubles you want to buy my honor? I who have been thirty years in the service of the Czar - and have earned three medals?
(He points to his medals, then looks at them sternly)
Three rubles....(In a lower voice.).....five.

Goldberg and Cohen

Oi!

(Goldberg turns to Cohen. Cohen goes down in his pocket and between them they scrape up two more rubles. Goldberg lays the money on the edge of the desk. Dyba puts a paper over it.

Dyba

Come back later. Come back later. The Chief is at supper.

The Others

(Bowing.)
Thank you, thank you.

(They exit. Dyba puts money in his pocket and writes again. Bogatka enters. He crosses himself before the ikon.)

Bogatka

Excuse me, you sent for me, your honor?

Dyba

(Looks up.)
Ah, Bogatka.)
(Goes to him.)
Listen, Bogatka. You've always been a poor man.

Bogatka

True, your honor.

Dyba

And foolish.

Bogatka

(Smiles up at him as if he were being flattered.)
True, your Honor.

Dyba

Now, I'm going to give you a chance to be smart and make a little money.

Bogatka

Me? You're joking, your honor.

Dyba

Are you willing?

Bogatka

Yes, your Honor, because you see, anybody wants to be smart, and make a little money, too.

Dyba

Then listen. The Jews are going to leave town. They need money. Buy their houses and furnishings - cheap - sell dear.

Bogatka

(Not understanding.)
Eh?

Dyba

Oh, you! A Jew buys a house for 5000 rubles - you give him 500.

Do you understand that?

Bogatka

Huh, yes, your honor. But what foolishness. I haven't any money. 500 rubles!. My!
(Laughs)

Dyba

You'll get the money.

Bogatka

(Laughs)
What fool will give me so much money?

Dyba

I will.

Bogatka

You'll give me money?

Dyba

Yes.

Bogatka

Because you like me?

Dyba

No, you idiot! To buy the houses.

Bogatka

(Stares at him.)
Oh!
(He realizes now that it's a trick.)
But, but....poor people! To take advantage of them like that! I have my God...(He turns to the ikon and crosses himself.) The Jews have a god, too, I think they have.....

Dyba

(Angrily)
You're a fool.

Bogatka

Excuse me, your honor.

Dyba

(Threateningly)
Now, listen, you! Do you want to have trouble with the police? You want your license to deal in timbre renewed, don't you?

Bogatka

(Terrified)
My license! Yes!

Dyba
(Sees that he has terrified him enough. Mysteriously)

Do you know who will give you the money? Not I. Do I looke as if I've got thousands of rubles?
(Whispers to him, and points over his shoulder to door R.)
His Excellency - the Chief of Police!

Bogatka

Oh!

Dyba

But keep your tongue or he'll cut it out for you!

Bogatka

Oh, my God!
(Drawing away terrified.)

Dyba

Don't forget. Do you know Berman?

Bogatka

Oh, yes! because you see, I've sold him my timbre all my life. He's the richest Jew in town. His daughter, excuse me, plays the fiddle

Dyba

Never mind about that. You'll buy Berman's house.

Bogatka

Oh!

Dyba

And you'll pay him not a kopek more than 3000 rubles.

Bogatka

But - but Mr. Berman - he is my friend. And my father always said to me "You blockhead.....

Dyba

(Stops him by taking his wrist fiercely and making him face him)
Do you know me?

Bogatka

(Frightened)
Yes.

Dyba

Then come tomorrow morning to my home and get the money.

Bogatka

Yes, your honor.

Dyba

(Threateningly.)
Go! And hold your tongue, or.....
(Bogatka backs out, unhappily and exits. Chernov enters door (L. He has just finished dinner. He has on a smoking jacket,

(and his vest is unbuttoned. As he enters he buttons up his (vest with one hand and picks his teeth with the other. He is (well satisfied with his meal, but a little plethoric from (overeating. Dyba comes silently to clothes tree, takes Cher- (nov's official coat from it and goes to Chernov with it. He (helps him off with the smoking jacket and on with the other. (Chernov crosses himself before the Ikon and settles down at (his desk to work. Dyba stands beside him with some papers, (respectfully waiting for Chernov to speak.)

Chernov

(Looks up at Dyba)
Well, what have you there?

Dyba

Some papers from Petrograd that just arrived.

Chernov

Let's have them.

Dyba

Here's that petition of the Jews to establish a Hebrew School in Kovno.

Chernov

Let's see...when did we send that paper to Petrograd?

Dyba

About five years ago, and the answer just came back, today.

Chernov

(Looking at details.)
Um! Send some more details. (To Dyba) Here, send it back to Petrograd.

Dyba

(Smoothly)
I think sir, it would be a good thing if we permitted the Jews to have the Hebrew School.

Chernov

What do they need the school for? They have to move tomorrow.

Dyba

Certainly, but it will make a good impression on the population.

Chernov

(Looks at Dyba's movements speculatively)
Oh!
(He takes the paper and signs it.)
Granted - what else?

Dyba

Here is that request of Rabinowitch to open a tobacco store two years ago.

Chernov

(Thinking.)
Rabinowitch...let's see, isn't his son a Revolutionary?

Dyba

Yes. Sent to Siberia.

Chernov

Bomb outrage?

Dyba

No, hymn.

Chernov

Hymn?

Dyba

Yes. He didn't stand up when the band was playing the National hymn

Chernov

(Tears the paper un angrily)
The nerve - what next?

Dyba

Here's the petition of the Jews of Kovno to start a new cemetery outside of the city, near the fortress.

Chernov

But the Jews are not allowed to live....there.

Dyba

They don't want to live there - only to be buried.

Chernov

Um! Can a Jew be buried where he's not allowdd to live?

Dyba

That's a big question.

Chernov

It's for the Senate to decide. Send it back to Petrograd.
(Looks at his watch)
Anything else?

Dyba

The order for the Jews to move from Kovno.
(Puts it before him, and hands him the pen.)
Sign it.

Chernov

(Takes the pen.)
Has a young lady called to see me?

Dyba

No. Sign!

Chernov

I'll wait a while.

Dyba

I beg your pardon, sir, but you have to sign it!
(He looks into Chernov's eyes steadily. Chernov looks at Dyba with the pen poised speculatively. They hold the position a minute. Berman, Wiener and Saul enter.)

Berman, Wiener and Saul

Good evening.

Chernov

(Lays down pen and goes to them.)
Good evening, my friends, I know what you came here for. I must tell you frankly I can do nothing for you.

Dyba

The order is from Petrograd. We can do nothing.

Berman

My dear sir, there are in Kovno about 50,000 Jews - 50,000 men, women and children - old men, weak, helpless women - little children. I know your paper is from Petrograd. It is cruel, inhuman, but we must make the best of it. I do not ask you to do anything impossible, but give us a little time, ten days - a week. A whole community cannot pick iteelf up and have in twenty four hours.

Chernov

I'm sorry, but.....
(He looks at Dyba)

Dyba

The order says twenty four hours.

Berman

(To Dyba with deep feeling.)
But we are not cattle! (To Chernov.) If we were fifty thousand cattle, you would have some pity. You would provide for them water, food, cattle cars. Give us at least trains....

Chernov

I'll see what I can do.....

Dyba

We have nothing to do with trains.

Berman

(Sadly)
We must walk?

Saul

(Bitterly)
I gave my arm to Russia. What is an arm worth? Ten thousand, five - three thousand rubles? Give me train tickets for three thousand Jews, or give me back my arm...(Near to tears) Give me back my arm.

Wiener

Sh, my boy! My boy....sh.....

Berman

We must walk?
(To Chernov and Dyba)
We, who are strong and well can walk, but we have hospitals there are people sick among us. Some are dying - children are being born - they cannot walk. Give us time at least to take care of them.

Chernov

I can't do a thing. I'm helpless.
(He looks at Dyba. Dyba tries to look sad and makes a helpless gesture.)

Berman

(Breaking down.)
Will you give us time to visit our cemetery and offer a prayer to our dead.

Dyba

(Showing a little fear.)
That's true. The dead are dead!

Wiener

What is a cemetery - but a field. What are the dead but dust. But the Jews are a funny people. The dead and the place they are buried in is sacred to them, and our cemeteries are so crowded. Perhaps it's my fault a little. I've practiced in Kovno over forty years. Give us time.

Chernov

(To Dyba, genuinely sorry and touched)
Dyba, perhaps another twenty four hours. What do you think?

Dyba

(Frowns)
I think...someone may telegraph to Petrograd - and you may lose your commission, sir.
(Exit door R.)

Chernov

(Looks after Dyba, then turns to them.)
I can't.
(Saul makes a motion to Wiener toward Chernov.)

Wiener

(Takes bills out of his pocket and going to Chernov drops them at his feet.)
You lost ...er.....(He looks at them.)....five thousand rubles.

Chernov

(Picks up the money.)
My dear Doctor, I've often lost money in that way, but not this time.
(Hands him back the money, turns and points to door where Dyba has gone out.)

That fellow is a spy. Do you think he is my Secretary? He is my superior. It is he who will telegraph to Petrograd.
(Through his teeth, looking at the door.)
The dog!

Berman
(To Saul and Wiener)
Come!
(They exit - Chernov looks after them, really sorry, then (with a shrug goes back to his desk and sits. Dyba enters.)

Dyba
(Goes to Chernov, smiling, and hands him a cigar.)
Here's a fine cigar.
(Chernov looks at him a moment, then accepts it and sits down (at his desk. Dyba obsequiously lights a match and gives him (a light.)

Chernov
Thanks.

Dyba
I had a good proposition made to me.

Chernov
What is it?

Dyba
(Chuckles.)
It's a good idea, I think. Some fellow, a very smart fellow, suggested to me that, since the Jews must go, he wants to buy the Jews houses. You see, if a house is worth 5000 rubles he will offer 1000 rubles, see?

Chernov
That's not very nice.

Dyba
(Laughs)
Yes, I told him it wasn't nice, but you see we can make a very big profit.

Chernov
We?

Dyba
I mean - your name won't appear at all! Oh, no! For instance, Berman's house is a beautiful house. I'm sure Mrs. Chernov would love to live in it. You could buy it for say 6000 rubles.

Chernov
H.....Berman's house?

Dyba
No one will know it. Besides it's a very good price. He might get

more if we give him time, but we won't give him time.
(He chuckles and hands him paper to sign.)
Sign the paper.

Chernov
(Takes out his watch and looks at it.)
I'll wait a little.

Dyba
(Harshly)
But....

Chernov
(Antrily)
I know my business. I'll sign it when I am ready!

Dyba
(Looks at him a moment, then bows obsequiously)
I beg your pardon.
(Goes toward door L stops and turns significantly)
A half hour's delay won't make much difference.
(Anna enters.)

Chernov
(Jumps up eagerly to greet her.)
Good evening, Miss Berman.

Anna
Good evening. I'm late a little!
(Dyba, looks at Anna suspiciously, and is nervous, feeling that (she is an enemyL He makes himself busy about the desk, intend-(ing to remain at the interview.)

Chernov
(To Anna, motions her to say nothing.)
Sit down, please.
(Anna sits - to Dyba)
Dyba, have you anything of importance to do here?

Dyba
Yes, these papers to go back to Petrograd....

Chernov
They'll wait.
(He motions him to get out. Dyba frowns and goes out. Chernov (goes to door, opens it and makes sure Dyba isn't listening. (Shuts door and comes to Anna.)

Chernov
I thought you weren't coming any more.

Anna
Oh, no. Our poor people are terribly worried. They're always used to coming to my father with all their little troubles, and now that they have this terrible trouble, they're flocking to our

house. My old nurse came to me for comfort. She who used to comfort me when I was a child. It nearly broke my heart.
(She covers her eyes with her hands.)

Chernov

(Comforting her.)
Too bad!

Anna

Oh, you'll help me, won't you? You promised me you'd find some way.

Chernov

Yes, if I can - legally, I'll do it gladly. Come, we'll look over the laws and see what we can find.

Anna

(Delighed)
Ah, I knew you would.

Chernov

Sit here.
(He places another seat along side of his at the desk. Anna sits. Chernov goes to book case and takes out a book, brings it to desk and sits beside her.)
Now.
(He opens the book.)
Let's see - the laws of 1892. Um....Jews who belong to the first guild - can pay 5000 rubles to the government have right of residence in Russia.....

Anna

Yes, but that affects only a few of the Jews in Kovno. I'm anxious more about the poor.

Chernov

Oh, for the poor. (He takes down five books.) We have plenty of laws for the poor Jews who are descendants of those who fought for Czar Nicholas the first in the Crimea - they have rights.

Anna

That affects only about a dozen families.

Chernov

Um! That's true. We'll look further....No....No.....wait - here's something. Families of children who are in the schools - no. You see, my dear, I'm not a lawyer. I'm not familiar with all the laws - there's so many of them....

Anna

(Pleadingly)
But try....perhaps you'll find something.

Chernov

Alright.....
(He turns a page or two, then looks at her with interest)

Tell me, why are you so interested in all the Jews? You're only a child, you can't carry the troubles of 50,000 on your little shoulders?

Anna

I'm not worrying about the 50,000 here in Kovno alone, but about the seven million in Russia, and not only the seven million in Russia, but the twelve million scattered all over the world.

Chernov

What! I can't see the connection.

Anna

Why do you drive the Jews?

Chernov

What? I don't know why, it's always so. The order comes from the government. They know, I suppose.

Anna

Why does the Government drive the Jews?

Chernov

I don't know. They must have some political reason for it.

Anna

That is the whole trouble. You don't know. Our neighbors don't know We live together, are friendly and trust each other, then comes an order that the Jews must be driven from fortified cities. The government does not want us to remain near the borders. Why? What interpretation can our friends and neighbors, with whom we've lived so many years, who have trusted us all this time, put upon such an order? Only that we are not to be trusted - that we are traitors.

Chernor

Oh, I never thought of that. Traitors - y um!

Anna

But it isn't true. You know it isn't true. We are not traitors. Russia is to the Jews no more than [illegible] a stepmother, and yet we are giving more than our share of life's blood in her defense. If you, who know us - know the conditions, by this cruel act of your government, learn to distrust us and consider us traitors, what will the rest of the world think? Now do you understand why I am worried not for myself alone, but for all the Jews?

Chernov

Yes, yes, I see. We'll look further.
(He looks through the books.)

Anna

(Dreamily)
That order does not affect only the Jews of Kovno, but the Jews of all the world. If that order could be withdrawn - if I could only bring it about - I'd gladly give my life.

Chernov

(Looks at her in admiration.)
There's something about your Jewish girls - you've got a wonderful spirit - but - let's get back to our laws.
(He looks at another page, then looks at her and at the door.)
That fellow Dyba, my secretary - he knows the laws backwards. He could find what we want in a minute.

Anna

(Eagerly)
Yes?

Chernov

But he's not to be trusted. We must find it ourselves - even if we have to sit here all night. Are you ready?

Anna

Yes.

Chernov

Good! Then take your hat off and make yourself thoroughly at home

Anna

No, no!

Chernov

Oh, yes! Let me help you.
(He makes to help her.)

Anna

No, no, don't bother. I'll take it off myself.
(She does so.)

Chernov

(Takes her hat and gloves and puts them away.)
There, that's better.
(As he passes her on the way back, he puts his arm around her shoulder. Anna shrinks away from him, unconsciously. Chernov sits down again.)
Let's see. The May laws of 1892 - No, we'll find nothing good in them.

Anna

They are terrible laws.

Chernov

(Turns to Anna.)
Do you know? You're a very funny people. If anybody wants to kick you, they kick you. You never kick back....

Anna

(With deep feeling)
Yes, it's only too true.

Chernov

But not you! I like your spirit! There's something about you

Jewish girls - I don't know what it is, but I like it.

Anna

Our women have always loved their people more than their own happiness. They have always been ready to sacrifice themselves for the good of the nation.

Chernov

That's it! It's fine! Like your Esther - like Judith, who came to Holophernes and cut off his head.
(He takes her hand laughingly)

Anna

(Draws her hand away from his.)
Please.

Chernov

(He holds on to it forcibly)
What a beautiful, white little hand you have.

Anna

Don't.
(She succeeds in getting her hand away.)

Chernov

(Laughs and looks at her with rising passion. He turns to the book but slaps it shut and turns to Anna.)
I have it.

Anna

(Eagerly)
Yes?

Chernov

(Picks up the order.)
Yes, I have it. This order says the City of Kovno. Now we can raise a quibble. What do they mean by Kovno? The city itself, without the suburbs too? That gives me a legitimate excuse for sending to Petrograd for further instructions!

Anna

Do you mean that seriously?

Chernov

Of course! It will take at least a month before the answer comes back from Petrograd, and by that time we may have a new minister of the interior - the whole situation may be changed.

Anna

Oh, I'll never be able to thank you sufficiently.....
(Chernov takes her in his arms and kisses her. Anna, surprised and shocked, struggles in his embrace a moment, then slaps him across the face. He draws away from her, looking at her, his face working with desire, and anger. Anna is turned from him, looking down, in pain. They hold the positions a moment.)

Anna

I must go.

Chernov

Don't go yet.

Anna

Where is my hat?

Chernov

(Doesn't know just what to do.)

Your hat - yes.

(Goes and gets the hat, and brings it to Anna. He stand in (front of her, but does not give it to her.)

Forgive me.

(Anna doesn't answer. He gives her the hat and she puts it on.)

It's not my fault that you are so pretty.

(He laughs.)

Anna

I came to you as a friend. I expected your help - not this.

Chernov

I'm sorry.

Anna

Good bye.

(She starts for door.)

Chernov

(Picks up her glove from desk.)

Your glove.

Anna

Thank you.

(She takes them and starts for the door again.)

Chernov

(When Anna reaches the door.)

Wait....one moment..

(Anna stops with her hand on the door.)

What about this order.....

(He picks it up from the desk.)

Anna

(Leaves the door and comes a few steps nearer to him.)

You've found a way. You'll write to Petrograd, won't you?

Chernov

Yes, I could, but.....

Anna

But what?

(She steps a little nearer to him anxiously)

Chernov

There's a great deal of risk connected with it. After all it's a mere quibble. It won't do me any good in Petrograd. It's a question if it's worth my while.

Anna

Ah, but you'll be doing a kind, a generous thing. That is it's own reward.

Chernov

(Laughs)
I'm not an idealist. I want a more material reward.

Anna

I'll speak to my father. I'm sure that can be easily arranged.

Chernov

(Goes to door and closes it.)
I don't want money.

(Goes to Anna passionately)
I love you. I want you.
(He tries to embrace her.)

Anna

(Shrinking away from him.)
Let me go!

Chernov

You're beautiful! There's not a girl like you in all Kovno. It's not only your pretty face and your slim figure, but your spirit that I love. I want you.....

Anna

(Struggles with him.)
Let me go - let me go!
(She succeeds in breaking away from him.)

Chernov

Am I so repulsive to you?

Anna

You're a beast.

Chernov

A beast, eh? Very well. I'll be a beast. You talked a lot about spirit, and your willingness to sacrifice everything for your people. We'll see what this fine talk amounts to. Here's this order. I can sign it now, or I can send it back to Petrograd. What shall I do?

Anna

(Shrinking back in horror and stares at him with wide eyes.)
Oh!

(They hold the position for a moment. Dyba knocks at the door. (Chernov turns slowly toward the door. Anna looks down and (turns away thoughtfully.)

Chernov

Come in!
(Dyba turns and enters. He is nervous.)

Dyba

Excuse me - but it's very important.

Chernov

Well?
(Dyba looks at Anna. Chernov sees the action.)
Go ahead.

Dyba

A pogrom has broken out in the city.

Chernov

What! A pogrom? This is your work, Dyba.

Dyba

No, no, I'm not responsible for this. The population knows that the Jews must go, so they are accusing them of being traitors -
(Anna starts, then turns away with a moan.)

Anna

Traitors!

Dyba

(Chernov looks at her.)
It started only with a disturbance in the outskirts, but it's spreading to the city. They are beginning to burn the houses!

Chernov

Houses, eh? Houses!

Dyba

Yes, sir. We must phone to the Commandant at the fortress to send out a troop - to save the houses.
(Outside - through the window a red glow can be seen in the (distance. Dyba runs to the window and drawing the curtains (aside, looks out.)
See!
(He goes anxiously to telphone.)
If you'll permit me.....
(He takes up the receiver.)

Anna

Oh, please do, quick.....

Chernov

(Dyba looks up anxiously)
Hang up that receiver!

Dyba

But the houses!

Chernov

I'm in authority here, not you!
(Dyba hangs up the receiver viciously)
Go!

Dyba

But, sir, in an hour it may be too late. They are coming to the better sections....

Chernor

Go, I tell you.
(Dyba goes out with a snarl, slamming the door behind him.)

Anna

Oh, how can you be so cruel!

Chernov

(Sarcastically)
Am I not a beast!

Anna

But men and women and innocent children will be murdered - young girls outraged.....
(The realisation of what that means to her comes to her.)
Oh, how can you be so cruel?

Chernov

(Significantly)
I'd much rather be kind.

Anna

Stop it! Oh, for pity's sake stop it.

Chernov

That is easily done - I have only to phone the commandant of the fortress, but.....
(Picks up the order.)
As long as this order remains another pogrom will break out in another section of the city.

Anna

Have pity.

Chernov

You can stop it all, if you say the word.

Anna

Oh!

Chernov

Well, what do you say?
(Anna is in torture, doesn't know what to say. Jacob enters, (with Dyba. Dyba stands behind Jacob, nervously. He has Jacob's (passport with him.

Jacob

(Sees Anna.)

Anna!
(Anna starts and looks up at him. To Chernov.)
Good evening.
(He crosses over to Anna.)

Chernov
(To Dyba angrily)
Didn't i tell you I didn't want to be disturbed?

Dyba
Excuse me.

Jacob
(To Anna)
Oh, i'm so glad you're still here. i was worried about you.

Anna
Jacob, there is a pogrom in the city.

Jacob
Yes, i know.

Chernov
(To Jacob)
What do you want, sir?

Dyba
The gentleman came for his passport.

Chernov
Passport?

Dyba
Sign it, please.
(Chernov signs the passport - he motions them to the door..
(Dyba exits. Jacob goes to Chernov.)

Jacob
There's a pogrom in the city....

Chernov
i know it.

Jacob
You are the Chief of Police, if you don't send out police....
or call out the troops.....

Chernov
i know my business.

Jacob
(Looks at Chernov.)
You mean to say you don't intend to stop it?
(Anna groans almost fainting. Jacob turns to her, and seeing
(her condition goes to her and supports her.)
Anna! Don't worry. Everything will be alright. it's really not a pogrom, only a little disturbance in the city.

Anna

(Looks at him - then away)
Yes, yes.

Jacob

You're so pale. What's the matter with you, dear?
(She turns further from him.)
Look at me.

Anna

(Doesn't look at him.)
Jacob.

Jacob

Yes?

Anna

Jacob!

Jacob

What, dear?

Anna

(Turns to him.)
Jacob....i love you!

Jacob

Yes, i know....

Anna

Always...you...you.

Jacob

Of course, my dear.
(He takes her hand.)
Your hands are as cold as ice. What is it, dear? You're not well.

Anna

No, no, it's nothing. Nothing.
(Crash is heard off stage. Pogrom effect heightened. Anna
(turns in horror, putting her hands to her ears to shut out
(the sound. Chernov turns and looks at Anna intently. Anna
(then turns to Chernov)
For God's sake stop it! Stop it!

Chernov

(Angrily)
I have nothing to do with you.
(To Anna)
Shall i sent for the troop?

Anna

(Nearly ready to faint.)
Yes.

Chernov

(Picks up the order from the desk.)
And send this back to Petrograd?

Anna

Yes!!
(Jacob looks from one to the other.)

Chernov

(Goes to phone.)
The commandant at the fortress.

Jacob

(To Anna)
What does it mean, Anna?

Chernov

(into phone.)
General? Chernov. Will you send a troop into the city to quell the riot? Alright, I'll be there.
(Hangs up - and exits.)

Jacob

Anna, what does all this mean?

Anna

(With unnatural calmness.)
Listen, Jacob, my great hour has come. We must forget our dream of love.

Jacob

What are you talking about?

Anna

I've reached the cross roads in my life. One road leads to you, the other to love for my people. Forgive me, if the love for my people is greater than my love for you.

Jacob

(Comes to her and looks into her eyes wonderingly)
Anna, let's go home.

Anna

No, I must remain here.

Jacob

Here?

Anna

Yes.

Jacob

In Chernov's house?

Anna

Yes.

Jacob

Good God! Are you mad?

Anna

No, Jacob, I see my way. I feel that I am called to save my people. What is my life - what is our love - compared to that? My supreme moment has come. Like Judith - the fate of my people is in my hands .....and I.....

Jacob

(Draws back startled.)
Judith!

Anna

I graep the opportunity gladly - joyously. There is no other way for me.

Jacob

Anna!
(He looks into her eyes fearfully)
You don't mean it. You can't mean it.

Anna

Yes, I do.

Jacob

(Takes her fiercely by the hand.)
If you really mean it - I'd rather kill you now.

Anna

My life belongs to my people. Later - you can do what you want with me.

Jacob

(Looks into her eyes and realizes that her mind is made up. He (sinks into a chair and covers his face with his hands.)
My God!

Anna

(Goes to him tenderly and talks to him as if he were a child.)
Listen Jacob! We are only two among the thousands. Suppose we do marry and live 50 years and have children? Can we be happy when we know that hundreds are being killed today - that thousands will drop by the way when they begin to drive us tomorrow - and that we can save them?

Jacob

I only know that I love you.

Anna

(Goes to window opens the curtains looks out, her heart torn (by conflicting emotions.)
Oh!
(She turns to Jacob.)
Jacob....and this.....
(She directs his attention to the flaming skies.)

Jacob

(Goes and takes her in his arms passionately)
I love you! What does that matter? What does anything matter? What does the whole world matter - when we love?

Anna
(Lies in his arms listlessly. Despairingly)
Oh!
(Mrs. Goldberg and the Cohens enter wildly.)

Cohen
Where is the Chief of Police?

Mrs. Goldberg
Oh, God! Our little shop is destroyed. My husband is wounded. Oh, my God!

Mrs. Cohen
No! I won't go! My child is sick. No, no, I won't go.

Cohen
Hush Becky! (To Jacob and Anna) They drive us, and when we're ready to go they attack us from behind. God, it's too much.

Mrs. Goldberg
Dear God! is there no one to hear us?

Cohen
God in Heaven, send us a deliverer!

Mrs. Cohen
(Goes to Anna.)
Anna! My child has Typhus - my child will die! Anna!
(She kisses Anna's hand mutely.)

Anna
(Embraces her.)
No, no!

Cohen
(Takes her gently away from Anna.)
Hush, Becky, what can Anna do?

Anna
(Turns to Jacob, her heart breaking.)
Jacob, can't you see?

Jacob
(Heartbroken, takes her in his arms.)
Anna! Anna!
(He kisses her on the brow as if she were holy.)

C U R T A I N .

"THE ETERNAL WANDERER."

ACT III.

"THE ETERNAL WANDERER."

ACT III.

SCENE: Same as Act I, except that the hangings are off, the furniture stacked up, and the pictures are off the walls and everything looks like a household breaking up.

TIME: Late afternoon of the next day.

DISCOVERED: MRS. BERMAN is at the table handling a few personal things. Among them is her wedding dress, some silverware and a few other relics that are dear to her. She tries bravely not to break down, and furtively wipes away a tear. BERMAN enters - he is pale and broken up, but tries to act naturally for the sake of his wife.

Berman
What are you doing, Rachel?

Mrs. Berman
Nothing, Aaron. Just looking over a few little things.

Berman
Yes, yes, but take along only what is absolutely necessary.

Mrs. Berman
(Holding up some silver knives and forks.)
These, Aaron? Our wedding present from my father?

Berman
(Walks back and forth a moment.)
Leave it.

Mrs. Berman
Oh!
(She breaks down and cries silently.)

Berman
(Goes to her and puts his arm around her tenderly)
My dear....

Mrs. Berman
(Controls her tears and looks up at him bravely)
Well take just one knife and one fork. They won't take up much room, will they?

Berman

Yes, take one.

Mrs. Berman

But Aaron, why are you in such a hurry, we have two more days.

Berman

My people are going today. We've lived together, and we'll go together.

Mrs. Berman

Yes, you're right, Aaron.

Berman

What is the matter with Anna?

Mrs. Berman

I don't know.

Berman

She seems so depressed - so unlike herself.

Mrs. Berman

Yes, and Jacob hasn't been here since yesterday. Have you seen him?

Mrs. Berman

No, do you know what I think? I think they must have quarrelled. Oh, well! Young people - young blood - if they have quarrelled - they'll make up again!

Berman

Yes, yes. (He sighs) They'll have many - many a quarrel before they'll learn to understand each other the way we do, eh, my dear?

Mrs. Berman

(Smiles at him wistfully)
Yes, I...I'll take a spoon too, just one spoon.

Wiener

(Enters. Goes straight to the chess board, brings it to the table, takes a black man in one hand, a white in the other and goes to Berman.)
White or black?
(Mechanically Berman puts his hand over the one Wiener extends to him.)

Mrs. Berman

Aaron! My dear doctor, at a time like this to play chess?
(Berman realizes the incongruity of it and turns away putting his hands over his eyes.)

Wiener

(Is fixing the men on the board.)
What's the difference. Come Berman, one more game.

Berman

No, Wiener.

Wiener

I'll give you a knight.

Mrs. Berman

I do believe, when Wiener faces the Angel of Death, he'll say to him "White or Black?"

Wiener

(Looks at her through his thick glasses.)
Eh? That fellow I know I won't be able to beat?
(He begins to play by himself.)

Berman

Wiener, is everything quiet in the city?

Wiener

(Lost in his game looks at the board as if addressing an opponent.)
Wait! Eh? Yes, everything's quiet since Chernov called out the troops.

Mrs. Berman

If not for Chernov and his soldiers we might all have been lost. Thank God!
(Anna enters. She is pale, and cold, listless and apathetic as if her soul were shriveled up. Berman and Mrs. Berman watches her anxiously.)

Berman

(Anxiously)
What is the matter, dear, why are you so depressed?

Anna

It's nothing.

Berman

(Whispers to Anna.)
You must be brave for your mother's sake. She is so upset.

Anna

Yes, yes, father.
(She goes to Wiener to escape him.)

Wiener

(Looks up and sees Anna)
Well, Anna?

Anna

Doctor.....

Wiener

See, I must play by myself, but anyway, I'm playing at last with someone worthy of my metal.

Burman

(With a forced laugh)
Oh, Wiener - Wiener!
(Exits.)

Anna

Doctor!

Wiener

(Looking up.)
Eh?.

Anna
Tell me, Doctor, Do we really have to leave?

Wiener
Eh? Who? Why do you ask such a foolish question?

Anna
The order is really being enforced - now?

Wiener
Is this something new? Huh!
(He busies himself at his game.)

Anna

(Leaves him.)
I can't understand it.

Mrs. Berman

(Goes to Anna.)
Anna, where is Jacob?

Anna

I haven't seen him.

Mrs. Berman
Anna, try to cheer up a little. Your father is worried about you.
(Anna is silent.)
And it won't be nice when Jacob comes if he sees you so downhearted
(Anna turns away miserably. Mrs. Berman hoping to cheer her
(up takes up the wedding dress on the table.

Mrs. Berman
Anna, I have a present for you. This is my wedding dress. I want to see you married to Jacob - in this dress.
(Anna closes her eyes and turns away from Mrs. Berman to hide
(the look of wretched hopelessness.)
And I can't wish you any more, dear, than that you will be as happy with Jacob as I have been with your father.
(She drapes her with it.)
You'll look lovely in it.

Anna

(Turns to Mrs. Berman pitifully.)
Mother! Mother!
(She buries her face on Mrs. Berman's shoulder and cries. Saul
(enters from the street.) Mrs. Berman
Sh....Anna....everything will be all right.

Saul

(Bitterly)
Now, everything is alright.

Anna

(Quickly - with hope)
What, Saul?

Saul

Thirty two cattle cars are ready for fifty thousand Jews, and we must move by six o'clock.

Anna

(Dazed)
Today!

Saul

We have a new telegram from Petrograd to that effect.

Wiener

A new one? What was wrong with the old?

Saul

(Sarcastically)
They want to save us the anxiety of too much delay.
(He laughs bitterly)
Now, Doctor, the question is - are there too many Jews, or too few cattle cars? You're a philosopher. What do you think?

Wiener

I think, Saul, there's too little humanity in Russia.

Saul

I'd give you my right hand on that - if I hadn't already given it to Russia!

Mrs. Berman

Sh....Saul!
(The voice of Berman and Bogatka are heard. They enter. Boga-tka is a little drunk.)

Bogatka

Well, Mr. Berman, let's settle.

Berman

Talk to Mrs. Berman.

Bogatka

(To Mrs. Berman)
Mrs. Berman, let's settle.

Mrs. Berman

But, why don't you offer us a decent price?

Bogatka

(With a drunken feeling.)
Because you see, Mrs. Berman I can't.
(Sees Wiener and bows to him.)
Good afternoon Mr....doctor....good afternoon.

Wiener

Good afternoon - oh, it's Bogatka!

Bogathka

Bogatka.

Wiener

What's he buying?

Saul

Bogatka is buying our house.

Wiener

Bogathka! Why, he's as poor as a church mouse.

Bogatka

(Proudly)
Yes, I buy everything - everybody.....
(Takes out a roll of bills.)
See, money is nothing.

Saul

(To Wiener.)
There's somebody behind him.

Wiener

Who could it be?

Mrs. Berman

Whoever it is ought to be ashamed of himself.

Bogatka

That's true! Believe me - I'm ashamed myself.

Wiener

(To Berman)
How much is he giving for the house.

Berman

About a sixth of what it cost me.

Saul

(Angrily)
Better burn it to the ground.

Mrs. Berman

Don't talk so, Saul! We can't take the house with us.
(To Bogatka)
Alright, Bogatka, And the furniture is included too.

Bogatka

And the furniture...and the silver, and the looking glass, too.
But, as I told you this morning, not a kopek more.

Mrs. Berman

You're cruel.

Bogatka

That's true.

Mrs. Berman
You're worse than a murderer.

Bogatka
That's true. Mrs. Berman - Mrs. Berman. You think I don't understand? I understand everything - you see - your house, in which your children were born - this table on which you eat your meals.. I understand.
(Turns to Berman)
I only wonder that you take it all so quietly.

Berman
You're mistaken, my friend, I'm not very quiet, but I must not cry out - I must not weep - this house I bought 29 years ago, and for twelve years I struggled to pay off the mortgage. Every beam, every nail - every piece of furniture - I worked hard to pay for. Everything in this house is bought with my life's blood. Every dish my wife has washed a thousand times with her own hands. This table knew her when she was young, when her hair was still black - not gray as it is now.
(He breaks and controls himself with an effort.)
But cry...no! We mustn't cry.
(He goes to the chess board and picks up the men with both (hands.)
These chess-men are also old. They remember when Wiener and I played our first game - many - many - years ago.
(He lets them fall out of his hands to the floor.)
Wiener - then - walked without a cane...and I...I....
(He turns to Wiener no longer able to control himself.)
Wiener - Wiener - you remember....
(The two old friends embrace and Berman cries on Wiener's shoulder.)

Wiener
(Controls himself.)
Aaron...sh...Be quiet....Be quiet.

Berman
(Making great effort to overcome his emotion.)
Yes, I must.

Wiener
This means that we played our last game yesterday. You won with the black. For twenty nine years we've been fighting over our chess, but do you know who really won? We both won. Because during our long war we've built up a lasting friendship. Eh, Berman?

Mrs. Berman
You're a philosopher - always a philosopher.
(She cries. Bogatha sees Anna's violin. He goes to Anna.)

Bogatka
(He is delighted at the prospect.)
Excuse me, Miss Berman, sell me your fiddle?

Anna
No, No!!
(She takes the violin, and Hugs it to her heart.)

Bogatka

What do you want with a fiddle now? I'll pay you five rubles. I can't pay you any more, because you see, -
(He whispers to her confidentially)
This is for me. I'll pay for it myself.

Anna

No, no! I won't part with it.

Bogatka

(Disappointed.)
Pshaw!
(He turns away and a thought strikes him in the way of consolation. To Mrs. Berman.)
Mrs. Berman, the wine in the cellar is included, too?

Mrs. Berman

Yes, yes.

Bogatka

(To Berman, enthusiastically)
Well, then, it's settled.

Berman

Yes, Bogatka.

Bogatka

(Takes Berman's hand and shakes it heartily.)
Good! Come to a notary and write a paper.

Berman

(To Mrs. Berman)
Come Rachel, your signature will also be needed.

Mrs. Berman

I'll get my hat.
(Exits.)

Wiener

(To Berman.)
Berman, I must go. But before I go, I want to tell you one thing. If we ever meet again....

Berman

(With a tearful laugh.)
If we ever meet again!

Wiener

If we ever meet again - understand - I'll let you play the white - that's all.
(Exit - Mrs. Berman enters with her hat on.)

Mrs. Berman

I'm ready Aaron.

Berman

(Starts from his revery)
Yes. Come, we must hurry so as not to be late at the synagogue.

Saul

The Synagogue?

Berman

Yes, I didn't tell you. We gather at the synagogue for half an hour to pray before leaving.
(They start. Berman turns to Anna and looks at her uneasily. (Anna sits listlessly hugging her violin. Berman goes to her.)
Anna, aren't you feeling well?

Anna

(Starts)
No, no! Don't worry about me. I'm alright.

Berman

(Leaves her, but still looking at her uncertainly, then turns (to Mrs. Berman and Bogatka.)
Come.

Mrs. Berman

(To Saul)
And you, Saul?

Saul

You pray for me, mother. I'm not in the humor for praying.

Mrs. Berman

(Chidingly.)
Saul!

Saul

I can leave without thanking God. I'm a stranger here anyway. Even as a child I felt myself a stranger - always a stranger - as all my people are. The trees, the flowers, the earth - they didn't belong to me. I went to war thinking that if my blood mingled with the earth, it might establish a closer kinship between us, but no. I'm left a cripple, and everything else is ruined.

Berman

My boy, you're young, but I have more experience. You've seen in the woods a colony of ants who've built up a home with infinite care and patience, and then man passes through, and with one careless step, ruins everything. What do the ants do? Do they mourn? Do they complain? No, they begin to build again. My son, we are like the ants. We must build again.

Anna

(Bitterly)
To what purpose - only to be crushed again?

Berman

It may be, but we will build again. We will build again.
(Annie doesn't answer.)

Saul

(After a moment's thought.)

You're right, father. I'll go with you.

Berman

(Turns to Mrs. Berman in delight)

Our old Saul, eh?

(Mrs. Berman beams on him and at Saul.)

Come.

(Berman, Mrs. Berman and Saul exit.)

Bogatka

Miss Berman, I've known you since you were so big - and you know me. My father always said to me "You blockhead, do business with Mr. Berman, he is an honest man." It's true. All my life I lived in the woods, but I never disturbed the ants. I'm not a bad man, only....I'm a man....

(He puts his hand to his mouth secretively)

Who must hold his tongue, or he will cut it out!

Anna

Who?

Bogatka

Miss Berman, I'll tell you, but please, don't tell anybody.

(He looks around cautiously.)

The Chief of Police Chernov!

Anna

(Starts)

No!

Bogatka

Yes, he's buying all the Jew's houses.

Anna

(With horror.)

Oh!

Bogatka

Excuse me, please sell me your fiddle?

Anna

(Realising how she has been tricked)

Bogatka, I won't sell you my fiddle, but I'll give it to you.

Bogatka

(Eagerly)

Will you, really?

Anna

Yes, but in return I want you to do something for me.

Bogatka

I'll do anything for you. What is it?

Anna

Can you get me a revolver?

Bogatka

(Starts)
A revolver?

Anna

Yes.

Bogatka

Oh, yes, I see. A revolver. That's right. Because, when you leave there are lots of bad men on the road. I'll get you one - sure!
(Anna gives him the fiddle, as if she were parting with her heart. Bogatka takes it eagerly, and picking out a rough tune on it exits. Anna stands listening till the tune dies away. Then she looks around the room hopelessly and starts to go into the house. Jacob enters, and stands near the door. He is dishevelled and looks as if he had been through a terrible travail, and hadn't slept all night.

Anna

(Barely above a whisper.)
Jacob!

Jacob

Yes.

Anna

Where have you been?

Jacob

I don't know - I - I've been out in the woods - I didn't sleep all night. I've been thinking - thinking - - -

Anna

Oh!
(She turns away from him wretchedly.)

Jacob

(Comes to her slowly)
Anna....
(She doesn't hear him, and he repeats.)
Anna....
(She turns to him hesitatingly)
I've been thinking about you all night, and....

Anna

(Turns away from him.)
Oh, please...don't.

Jacob

But we must face it, Anna.

Anna

Must we?
(She is still turned from him.)

Jacob

I've been fighting it out all night. I didn't know what to do. The first thought that came in my mind was that I must kill you and myself.

Anna

That would be the best for both of us.

Jacob

My heart was full of bitterness, but as I tramped, and tramped, and tramped, I finally found the right way. Anna, there is only one thing I know - I love you.

Anna

(Turns toward him, but shrinks away from him.)
No.

Jacob

Yes, I love you. Everything else we must forget - just as if it were a bad dream - nothing more.

Anna

I can never forget.

Jacob

You will in time - as I've forgotten it. I will remember only that you suffered for an ideal.....

Anna

(Bitterly)
An ideal - my ideals - all in vain - in vain - I've been tricked - tricked! Jacob, what am I? What am I?

Jacob

My love - my wife!

Anna

No, no, no! That can never be.

Jacob

(Takes her hands and speaks to her earnestly)
Listen to me, Anna. We'll get married at once. We'll leave Russia. We'll go to America. We'll forget everything, and begin a new life there.

Anna

(Protestingly)
No, no, we can never be happy.

Jacob

Yes, Anna, yes. We're young, life is all before us, and we love each other.

Anna
No, Jacob, no. You go - go alone - leave me here. Forget me.

Jacob
Forget you? Never! I love you!

Anna
He killed my soul. I have nothing to bring to you. For me....

Jacob
(Takes her forcibly by the arms and makes her face him.)
Anna...do you love me?

Anna
I don't know.

Jacob
Anna!

Anna
Yes, Jacob, i do love you. Oh, you are so generous, so fine, so big hearted, but.....between us will always stand the shadow of this man.

Jacob
It it shut out of my mind as if it had never been.
(Fiercely)
Don't speak about it.

Anna
Yes, Jacob, but a year - five - ten years from now THIS HORROR will loom up like a ghost and come between us....

Jacob
No, no, Anna. I swear.....

Anna
Listen to me, Jacob. I know that you mean well. I know, should we marry, that you would never say a word openly. But your every look your very attempts to keep silent and spare me - will kill me.

Jacob
Anna!

Anna
And if it is not so - and i should only think it is so - the result will be the same.

Jacob
You have no reason, Anna, to ever think that I could be so small.

Anna
(Steadily, looking into his eyes.)
Jacob, you are quite sure that the feeling you have for me now, is not so much love - as pity?

Jacob

Oh, no, no! I love you.
(Anna looks away from him hopelessly)
Now, Anna, listen to me. You aren't in a condition to think for yourself. You must let me think for you.

Anna

(Listlessly)
Yes.

Jacob

You'll go with me. I'll take you to my mother. You can stay there. You need rest.

Anna

Yes, rest.

Jacob

(Looks at his watch)
We have, very little time. Now, you get ready, and I'll run over to the hotel to get my things. Tell your parents of our plans while I'm gone. They'll be happy, too. I'll be back in about twenty minutes.
(Looks at her a moment uncertainly, then goes to her assuming cheerfulness.)
Now, cheer up, little girl. Smile.

Anna

(With a ghost of a smile.)
Yes, Jacob.

Jacob

Good!
(He pats her gently on the cheek and starts out.)

Anna

(Looks after him, and when he reaches the door, cries.)
Jacob!

Jacob

(Stops and turns to her questioningly)
What, dear?

Anna

(Hesitates a moment and controls herself.)
Nothing. When you come back I'll be ready.
(He exits.)
(In torture.)
Oh.....
(She staggers slightly and drops into a chair covering her face with her hands.)
He didn't kiss me.
(The voices of Bogatka and Dyba are heard off stage. As they Enter.)

Bogatka

(Handing deeds to Dyba.)
Yes, everything's settled and signed up.

Dyba

(Takes papers from Bogatka.)

Good!

(Bogatka is now half seas over. Dyba looks around.)

And the furniture too?

Bogatka

Yes, and the looking glass, too. But I want to tell you, your honor, that my father....

Dyba

Shut up! How many rooms?

Bogatka

How many rooms? One - two - Oh, lots of rooms, but I want to tell you, your honor, that my father....always said to me "You block-head.....

Dyba

Shut up!

(Exits.)

Bogatka

(Follows Dyba)

But my father.....

(Dyba slams the door shut in his face.

(Bogatka stops surprised, stares at the door, tries to open it, (but can't.)

And he was right....

(He goes up toward Miss Anna.)

Bogatka

Oh, Miss Berman, how do do. (Goes to her) I've got it.

Anna

(Dully)

What?

Bogatka

The revolver!

Anna

(Eagerly.)

Oh! Yes, give it to me.

Bogatka

(Takes revolver from blouse and hands it to Anna.)

There, it's loaded.

Anna

(Takes the revolver and puts it in the bosom of her dress.)

Thank you, Bogatka.

(Exits.)

Bogatka

That's all right.

(He starts for the door that Dyba had gone out of. When he reaches the door, the door opens in his face again. Dyba enters.)

I want to tell you, your honor, that my father....

Dyba

(Angrily)
What are you following me around like a dog for? What do you want?

Bogatka

Because you see, my feelings are hurt - there's something wrong. I'm not satisfied.

Dyba

Didn't I pay you?

Bogatka

Yes.

Dyba

Then what do you want?

Bogatka

I did my best. Didn't I do my best? Still I'm not satisfied.

Dyba

You're a drunken fool!

Bogatka

My wife'll laugh at me, all the women will laugh at me. Where do I benefit? I bought four houses - with gardens. I bought furniture bedding, silver wear - clothing and a looking glass. I bought three horses and four cows, and I'm just as poor as I was before. Yes, she'll laugh at me.

Dyba

Did you buy it with your money, idiot?

Bogatka

No, it was your money, but I'm not satisfied.

Dyba

(Impatiently)
Oh, get out. Get out.

Bogatka

I bought so much, and I haven't got anything. I bought Mr. Berman's house - he's a good man and I robbed him. Damn!

Dyba

Hold your tongue, you!

Bogatka

Four houses, horses, cows, furniture and gardens - I robbed them all - what for? Not for me.....All I have is the fiddle. Excuse me your honor, I think you're a crook.

Dyba

Shut up, you drunken fool! I gave you money and you drank it up.

Bogatka

Yes, that's true. I drank it, because you see, I was ashamed.

Dyba

(Hands him a couple of rubles.)

Here, now get out.

Bogatka

(Looks at the money and spits on it, angrily. Then he makes (as if he is going to throw the money into Dyba's face, but (he changes his mind and putting it into his pocket he starts (off.)

Houses, gardens, horses, cows, and a looking glass. I can't understand it.

(Berman and Mrs. Berman enter.)

Excuse me, Mr. Berman. I did business with you all my life and it was good. And now I have business with him.....

(Indicates Dyba.)

...and it's no good. I bought your house, your furniture and your looking glass, but I haven't got anything It's all his.

Berman

(With a look of understanding to Mrs. Berman)

Oh!

Bogatka

Mr. Berman.....(Takes his hand)....Good bye. Come back again, and we'll do business together again, and I'll never buy your house ag again.

(Bogatka exits.)

Mrs. Berman drops helplessly into a chair. Dyba stands brazenly (with his hands in his pocket, looking around proprietarily.)

Berman

Don't worry, we'll vacate. We'll be ready in a few minutes.

(Looks around and seeing the mezuzza on the door.)

You don't need this, sir.

(He starts for the door.)

Dyba

(Afraid Berman might want something valuable.)

What?

Berman

(With his hand on the mezuzza)

This - we call it - Mezuzza! It's just a passage from our scripture. Every Jew has it on his door. You'll allow me to take it with me?

Dyba

Oh, I see. A Jewish Ikon. Sure. Take it.

Berman

Thank you.

(He looks around as if looking for something to pull the mezuzza (from the door, remembers that he has a pocket knife and takes (it out of his pocket. Begins to unfasten the mezuzza and his (hands tremble.)

Dyba

I'll help you....

Berman

(Hastily)
No! No, sir, thank you.
(Mrs. Berman cries silently. Berman takes off the mezuzza (and puts it in his pocket. To Mrs. Berman.)
Rachel, come let's get ready.
(Mrs. Berman doesn't move. He goes to her and helps her up.)
Come.

Mrs. Berman

(Controls herself.)
Yes, Aaron.
(She starts to follow Berman. Berman exits - Mrs. Berman turns (back to Dyba.)
My dear sir - I have a cat - she is very old, and has but one eye, but, please sir, do not drive her out. Feed her a little. Thank you, sir.
(Exits.)
(Dyba, with fiendish joy, looks around at everything of which (he is now the proprietor. He takes out his memorandum book (and figures up the cost and his profits, chuckles and is very (much pleased. Anna enters. She comes in stealthily, carrying (a note enclosed in an envelope. Anna starts when she sees (Dyba.)

Dyba

(Sees Anna!)
Oh!
(He looks at her intently and laughs.)
Listen girl. Your father and mother are ready. Are you ready, too?

Anna

Yes.

Dyba

Good.
(He starts to go and comes back to her.)
You foolish girl. Did you think Chernov intended to help you?

Anna

(Startled.)
What do you mean?

Dyba

I know everything.
(Anna shrinks away from him in shame.)
You ought to kill him.

Anna

Him?

Dyba

Yes.

Anna

(Half to herself.)
That wouldn't help me.

Dyba

You're a funny people. Any other girl would shoot him down like a dog.
(Anna shrinks away from him. Significantly)
And I would be the first to protect her.

Anna

(More to herself than to him.)
No.

Dyba

(Looks at her a moment contemptously, and goes to door.)
Tell your father to leave the keys at my office.
(Exits.)

Anna

(She waits till Dyba is gone, then looking around to make sure (she is quite alone, she puts her note prominently on the table (so it can readily be found, looks around once more pitifully, (as if she would like to embrace all the familiar things that (have meant so much to her all her life. With a sob she makes (her way slowly to the table and embraces it.)
Dear, dear old table - good old table....
(She leaves the table and looks around at the walls.)
Dear, old, walls - you're sold - like me.
(She sobs and turns away. She touches a chair here, another (article of furniture there, mutely. Then she takes up the (wedding dress.)
My wedding dress. Tell Jacob I love him too much - I can never wear you. I am going alone - on my long - long journey. Tell mother to forgive me.
(She kisses the dress, puts it down again, and straightening (up, takes the revolver out from the bosom of her dress.
(Chernov enters.
(Anna is just about to raise the revolver. When she hears (Chernov, she puts the revolver behind her back and turns to (face him.)
What do you want?

Chernov

I want to explain.

Anna

There's nothing to explain. You'd better leave me.

Chernov

I must explain. You won't be angry with me, when you know the truth. I was honest with you, Anna. I sent the move order back to Petrograd, as I promised you, but Dyba - Dyba telegraphed to the Department of the Interior. This morning a new order came, and I am suspended. Dyba is the new Chief of Police. The dog!

Anna

(Listlessly)
It doesn't matter. Now, go! Go!

Chernov

But.....

Anna

Better go, before.....

Chernov

(Steps toward her eagerly)
Anna....
(Anna unconsciously moves her arms and discloses the revolver)
What's that? What does this mean?

Anna

Leave me alone. Go away.
(She tries to raise the revolver. Chernov grasps her hand.
(Anna struggles to retain it as if struggling for her life.)
No, no! It's mine! Don't take it away from me. Don't! Don't!!
(Chernov succeeds in taking it away from her.)

Chernov

(Startled by the realization that she intended to commit suicide.)
Anna! How could you think of such a thing.

Anna

(Pleading)
Oh, I beg you - give it back to me. It's my only hope - don't take that from me, too. Give it back to me.

Chernov

(Puts the revolver into his pocket.)
Don't be foolish, Anna. Listen to me. There's nothing to be excited about. You don't have to go if you don't want to. I'll take care of you, and.....

Anna

(Passionately)
Can't you understand that I hate the very sight of you. That every word you speak to me is an insult - that your very presence is an insult. If I had that revolver now, I'd kill you - first - and then myself.

Chernov

(Laughs.)
My dear girl - I'm lucky that I took it away from you, eh?

Anna

Don't laugh - you better go - before it's too late for you.
(Jacob enters - Anna sees him.)
Jacob.....
(Jacob stands and looks from one to the other.)

Jacob

(Goes to Chernov and faces him intently)

What do you want here?

Chernov

It's none of your business.

Jacob

Isn't it - damn you!

(He takes Chernov by the throat to choke the life out of him. (They struggle for a moment.)

Anna

Jacob! Jacob!

Chernov

(Succeeds in loosening Jacob's hold on his throat - and throws (him off.)

You dog of a Jew!

(He draws the revolver. Jacob grasps his hand and they strug- (gle for the revolver. The revolver goes off. Chernov drops (to the floor. The revolver still in his hands. Jacob bends (over him. Chernov recovers slightly, and slowly begins to (lift the revolver toward Jacob.)

Anna

(With a warning cry throwe herself in front of Jacob.)

Jacob!

(Jacob tries to force her behind him. Chernov hasn't enough (strength to fire and his arm drops back again. Jacob bends (over Chernov and listens to his heart.

Jacob

(Anna stares with wide eyes. Jacob rises and goes to Anna)

Anna, nothing stands between us now.

(He embraces her.)

Anna

(Anxiously)

Yes, but what will they do to you?

(Berman, Mrs. Berman and Saul enter excitedly, before Jacob (can answer. They stare in astonishment.)

Berman

What has happened?

Mrs. Berman

(Sees Chernov.)

Oh, my God!

(Drum beat is heard. Dyba enters with soldiers.)

Dyba

Move! Time to move!

(He sees Chernov, and looks at Anna quickly)

What is this?

(The others are silent.)

Chernov

(Has regained consciousness. Weakly)

Duba.....

(Dyba goes to Chernov and bends over him.)

Tell my wife - it was - an accident.

(He dies.)

Dyba

(Straightens up.)

An accident.

(Jacob and Anna look at each other quickly)

Yes.

(He looks at Anna significantly)

An Accident!

(Anna goes to table. Dyba looks around at the house, which is (now his, joyfully.)

Come. Your time is up. Move!

(Anna has picked up her note. She slowly tears it up. The drum (continues beating. Through the window, on the street, Jews can (be seen moving on their way.)

C U R T A I N .

"THE ETERNAL WANDERER."

EPILOGUE..

SCENE: An open field, stretching away in the distance.

TIME: Night. Dim light, just sufficient to see the figures.
A wonderful sky effect, showing stars, cold and brilliant, but no moon.
A drum is heard beating very far away.

DISCOVERED: Jews of the city - old men and old women, young men and women - and children - the Jewish population of the city wandering on their way.

Among them can be recognized the Goldsteins, and the Cohens. Mrs. Cohen is weeping inconsolately. Cohen has his arm about her. Their child is not with them. Wiener, Saul and Berman and Mrs. Berman, Jacob; Anna also can be seen. Berman is supporting Mrs. Berman. The men have packs on their backs - the few precious things they could not leave behind. Some of the women carry bundles too.

They are chanting prayers.

Among them appear suddenly THE ETERNAL WANDERER and the GIRL OF THE PROLOGUE. They stop. The rest pass on, and they are left alone. Drum stops beating.

Girl

Again - wandering - again.

Wanderer

Yes.

Girl

How much longer? How much farther?

Wanderer

Patience - patience!

Girl

I'm tired. When do we rest?

Wanderer

Soon. Soon!

Girl

We will never reach the end.

Wanderer

We will reach the end. Wait - we will reach it.

Girl

Is there really hope?

Wanderer

Yes. When the sun rises in the East.

Girl

But the night seems everlasting. Will the sun ever rise?

Wanderer

(Stands gazing into the distance with his blind eyes.)

Yes. I can see the sun rising.

(The girl, her face transfigured with hope, rises, and standing beside him, looks eagerly off toward the East. Both hold the picture. There is a flash of crimson on the horizon. A ray of sunlight falls on their faces.)

C U R T A I N .

February 8th 1916.
Lakewood, N. J.